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INSTITUTE IN KOCHI ON TUESDAY. ■ AATHIRA PERINCHERY

Marine exhibition draws crowds

AATHIRA PERINCHERY
KOCHI

An exhibition of marine aquatic life, mariculture and other fisheries-related topics conducted by students and researchers of the Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute (CMFRI) here on Tuesday saw a huge footfall. Over 4,000 people visited the exhibition till 4 p.m.

The show involved live experiments, working models with students explaining them to viewers and demonstrations of cage culture.

"A lot of people showed interest in cage culture, what species to grow and whom to contact for more details," said Binoy Bhaskaran, a technical assistant who was one of the people explaining aquaculture to the public.

Details about mangrove ecosystems, an explanation of the use of GIS for mapping of fishing zone hotspots and beach litter maps, samples of fresh catch of different fish species were also part of the exhibition. More than 2,500 specimens - including the common octopus and different species of sharks - preserved in formalin were also on display.

"I found the stomach contents of the shark on display most interesting," said Devisha Krishnakumar, a student of eco-

nomics at St. Paul's College, Kalamassery.

However, excitement was most perceptible at the marine aquarium display units, which housed colourful reef fish like the bluering angelfish, yellow-edged moray eels, live corals and sea anemones.

While most viewers were busy taking photographs of the fish, Jyotiraditya Ramesh, a student of the Saraswathy Vidya Niketan Public School, was excitedly scribbling down details of his favourite fish species on display in the marine aquarium. "I am extremely interested in fish and I want to learn more about them," the nine-year-old said.

"We took a special permission of leave from his school so that he could get to see the exhibition," said his father Ramesh Kumar.

Age was no bar for the viewers. Seventy-five-year-old Thankappan A.K. came all the way from Panangad for the show. "I have never seen many of these fish in all my life, though I am a fisherman by profession," he said, pointing to the colourful powder blue fish swimming swiftly in their marine aquarium display.

"The aim of the programme is to take science to the public," said CMFRI Director A. Gopalakrishnan.